

T.H.E.

Good Womans Champion

Or,

A defence for the weaker Vessell, being
fit for Widdowes, Wives, Maidens, or
others, to read or heare.

Wherein is vindicated the bitter reproaches,
scandalous writings of some fantastick men, against poore
harmlesse Women, and Maidens.

With a carefull Wives good Counsell to a
carelesse bad Husband.

By I. A.



Printed at London for Francis Grove, and are to be sold at his Shop
neare the Sarazens Head on Snow Hill.

To all the good women in *England*
of what degree soever.

M Adam, or Mistris, Dame, or courteous Maid
Your vertues here in brief I haue display'd;
If you be pleas'd these lines to over-look,
For whose sweet sakes I pend this little Book,
In spite of envie, who so harsh did write,
Seeking for to eclipse your glory quite;
But you, like silver Cinthia doe appeare
Unto your Phœbus, usher of the yeare;
Or like those golden Stars so bright that shines,
Which spacious Heaven in its Orbe combines;
To you, faire Soules, this Work I dedicate,
Because that malice, vertue still doth hate.

I am no Pimp, nor Champion for a Whore,
To usher Puncks; or in a Tavern roare,
The wrongs of all good women I would right,
I am your Champion, and for you ile fight;
My Sword and Pen your honours shall maintaine,
Saluting you, I rest, yet still remaine

The admirer of your virtues,

I. A.
The

The good Womans Champion; Or,

A defence for the weaker Vessell.

Gentle Reader, or Hearer, I know it is a hard taske to please all fancies, and I am as certaine there are many snarling criticks in this age, that willout of their malicious wisdomes give a harsh censure on this ensuing Subject; which if they do I care the lesse, because the matter which I write of is honest, and in defence of harmlesse and vertuous Women.

Wherefore when I considered the manifold aspersions, bitter taunts, envious rebellings, slanderous raylings, and malignant writings of some inveterate ill-bred Spirits (which would be accounted men) against poore harmlesse, silly, and weake women, who are not able with that little peece of flesh, called their Tongue, (which is their chiefe defence or weapon) to expresse, or other wise to vindicate themselves, in writing the injuries and scandals daily divulged abroad in fantastick Pamphlets & Verses, as the Bear-baiting of women, the Parliament of Women, the Woman-hater, the Gossips meeting, the Crab-tree Lecture, Vinegar and Mustard, and I know not what; for all these, and more are spitefully somented

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against

against that noble Sex, of matchlesse & immaculate creatures, whose deserved tooth to illustrate and set forth I cannot, either with speech, or in writing.

Those men I say, (whose tongues are like a double-edged sword, their pens made of Goose-quills, their inke of Galls, and their bzaines adled, who hath neither charity wisdom, or modesty) they surely forget that eber they came of a woman, or had a mother, who (under God) first gave them life, nourished them in her body, brought them into the world with paine, and like the Pelican, fed them with her own blood, and bred them with care & industry: such men may very fitly be compared to the Ulper, that destroyeth the wombe that bare them, and we all doe know that ingratitude is a Monster, and she which brought forth such an abortive birth into the world was surely delibered before her time.

A woman was the most beautifull and rare peece of Architecture that eber was created upon the face of the earth, and framed by the best workman in the world; for when she was first created or borne, she was not a childe or infant but a perfect and compleat woman; neither was she made of base earth or clay as man was, but of the purest of her Husbands flesh and blood, being a rib taken out of his side, and next of all to his heart, and therefore (in my opinion) it is against nature, nay against the Law of God, to abuse or hurt the same, being their own flesh and blood, as too many do, which
is

*frances maffeston her book
in praise of women & good one*

is much to be lamented; but herein the old proverb is truly verified, that the weakest still goes to the walls, and a low hedge is soon stept over.

Therefore you satyricall Antagonists, and others, that so bitterly enveigh against poore women, if you would be pleased but to vie in the sacred Scriptures, where you may find sufficient proofe that they ought to have more due respect allotted them, then some of you will acknowledge, or profess they should enjoy; and although man be the head, and is (or ought to be) endued with more wisdom and strength then a weak woman, yet he ought not to triumph over, or injure so harmlesse a Soule, without whom man by no means can subsist; for did not God say of Adam in the creation, It is not good for man to be alone; And further, God saith, I will make him an Helper meet for him; therefore shall a man leave his father, and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh. Thus you may perceiue how necessary is the sweet society and company of a vertuous woman to her Husband, for she is his helper at all affaires, being carefull of her family, keeping him neat and decent both in wallen, linnen, and other necessaries, cleanly in dressing his dyet, and a loving Nurse to him both in sicknesse and health; wherefore a man ought to love his wife above all the world, they being (as the Lord saith) one flesh.

If you will heare what St. Paul saith of a woman, it is thus; A woman is the glory of
A 3 man.

man. And Solomon (the wisest of men) saith, A
vertuous woman is a crowne to her Husband;
now if a woman be a glozy to her husband,
how is that man blest which enjoyeth such a
wife, who doth crown his heart with variety of
content; she, like the fruitfull Vine bringeth
forth sweet childezen (which are the blessings
of God) being the fruit of their owne loynes,
who prefer beth (if the Lord please) their Fa-
thers name to the end of the world by their po-
sterity: And the wise man further saith, Who
so findeth such a wife, obtaineth favour of the
Lord. Ten thousand times happy is that
man, that with a wife can obtain such heaven-
ly labour; but Solomon further addeth, that
the price of a vertuous woman is far above Ru-
bies, and let her be as the loving Hind, and plea-
sant Roe, and be thou ravisht alwaies with her
love.

It is the common custome now adates a-
mong most men to hearken after wives with a
great portion, & rich friends, never regarding
how she is qualified, or whether she be addi-
ed to vertue or vice, but wealth is the chiefe
mark at which they aime, & sometimes they hit
the white they shoot at, yet come home by weeping
crosse; but a poore woman, be she never so ver-
tuous, is not regarded with them; but you have
heard her price, and how high a rate the wise
man doth value her at; yet for all this (though
a good woman be as loving as the Hind, and
pleasant as the Roe to her Husband, seeking
by all means possible she can to please him, ei-
ther

ther with kinde and loving speeches, or pleasant and modest behauiour) there are some forward men (like churlish Naball) that are neuer contented with whatsoeuer she doth or sayes, when a kind and loving husband would think himselfe blest to enjoy such a treasure, & be raviſht with the love of such a wife.

If you will be pleased to heare what St. Peter doth say for wives, it is thus; Husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessell, being heires together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.

These words are to shew Husbands, that there should be a kinde of loving duty by them allowed to their wives, and that they should live and dwell together in civil and discreet knowledge, and not with wrangling, discord, and envie; for a wise man will give honour to his wife aboue all women for many respects; first, because she is his wife (and it may be hath borne him children) then as she is a woman, and a Christian; likewise he is to beare with her infirmities (if she have any) because she indeed is the weaker Vessell; for God hath joyned them together as one body, that they should both be heires to inherit the grace of eternall life; for where man and wife doth live in unity and peace, their prayers no doubt shall be heard.

St. Paul writing to the Ephesians saith thus; Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himselfe for it. And in

another place he uttereth these words; Husbands, love your wives, & be not bitter against them. I could heartily desire that some unkind husbands would take notice, and hearken to these words of the blessed Apostle, with what a type he doth perswade and exhort them to love their wives, which would almost move a stone to beare; and I could wish them to mark with reverence, and to take it to their heart of whom he speaketh, and his comparison, which is the Church; for he compareth them by no lesse then Christ, the blessed Son of God, our Saviour and Redeemer, who gave his life for us, to redeeme our sinfull Soules from Hell and damnation; this is a deep, yet a sweet perswasion to love. The Apostle also exhorteth Husbands not to be bitter to their wives, but there are too many now adayes that will not hearken to his counsell, but I will use the words of Solomon, who saith thus; A contentious man is apt to kindle strife, and hatred stirreth up contentions, but love covereth all trespasses.

This saying of the wise man methinks should quell those foolish mens follies which utter and write such invecitives, and fantastick rebellings, taunts, and iests against women, for these are those wicked spirits the Devills Agents, which soweth discord, and breedeth contentions, kindling the coles of strife, hatred, and disdaine in divers families betwixt man and wife, never perswading to peace, love or unity, which should hide and cover all domestic

mettlick farrs or trespasses ; and they make as
though a woman were but as a meere cipher,
and stand for nothing, but let them know thus
much, that a woman is worthy of a far better
respect, for she is the vessell of eternitie, and is
(or ought to be) the closet or cabinet of a mans
heart, his summum bonum, or his All in all, his
chiefest & secretary, or his second selfe ; for (as
it is said) they are one flesh, yet some snarling
criticks there are who will not blush to say, that
unto a woman we should reveale no secret, or
that they hardly ever heard or read of a dis-
creet, vertuous, or wise woman. To answer
them in brief amongst many, let them but looke
into the first of Samuel, where they may finde
it written thus :

Abigail was a woman of good understanding,
but her husband Nabal was churlish, and evill
in his doings. Now, if she had not bin a woman
of wisdome & understanding, David had slaine
her husband and every one of his servants, (for
his family was great) which Abigail, for her
wisdome, David did marry after her husbands
death. Also in the second of Samuel you may
read, how a wise woman saved the City from
destruction when it was besieged by Joab.
Likewise, did not Holchurnes and his servants
marvell at the wisdome of Judeth, and she af-
terwards saved the City (when he had besieged
it) by cutting off his head. Also, Boaz saide
to Ruth, All the city of my people doth know
that thou art a vertuous woman. And was not
Susanna a vertuous woman, that would rather
suffer death then yeeld to the villous and wicked

red Elders, Many more proofes may be objected against those envious back-biters, and slanderers of that worthy Sex; for a woman was the vessel of the Holy Ghost, which nourished in her wombe, and brought forth into the world (the Redeemer of Mankind) our blessed Saviour Christ Jesus; Also, did not others women follow Christ, and ministered unto him, being present at his death: to whom he appeared at his Resurrection: And did not Pilates wife fore-warne her husband to have nothing to doe with Christs death?

Having thus briefly written of some vertuous, good, and discret wives & women, I think it not amisse to say a little in defence of vertuous Virgins and Maids; In the 22. of Deut. it is said, That they are to be punished that bring an evil name upon a Virgin; and in 1 Cor. 7. it is thus, If a Virgin marry she hath not sinned; and was not Iepthas daughter of Israell a vertuous Virgin, who willingly submitted her selfe for a sacrifice to fulfill her Fathers vow? And did not Christ compare the five wise Virgins to the kingdome of heaven? But amongst other Virgins, me thinks I should not bury in oblivion the memory of our famous Country-woman, Elizabeth, late Queene of England. who for her time was accounted the Phoenix of Christendom, and admired for vertue and wisdom throughout the world; She kept her land in peace, and her forreigne enemies in awe; she was truly religious, for which the Lord blessed her to her end; and thus much I say of her (in spite of envious detractors) she dyed

died a good woman, and a Virgin Queen.

Thus have I in brief related some passages and collections out of the sacred Scriptures in defence of good, vertuous, and harmlesse women, but if there be any that will not beleve the same, let them heare what St. Paul saith unto them; Vnbeleevers shall not enter into everlasting rest. And now in my opinion it is unchristian, uncharitable, and immodest, for any man so bitterly to erreigh and write against a woman, which naturally he should love, cherish, and honour (for many respects, as is before said) above all the creatures in this world. I must confesse that the conditions and humours of some fantastick men are fickle, various, & unconstant; they are double tongued, and false hearted, they will protest, and say one thing, and meane another, as too many good women have found by too full experience; for when they sue for love, oh, what dissembling teares, feigned sighes, deep protestations, solemn vowes, large promises, and flattering speeches will proceed from their dissembling lips: now many a gentle and tender hearted woman and maid hath compassionated and pittied their Crocodilian teares, and beleaved their perjur'd vowes, which oftentimes hath procured their sorrow; for when such false men have obtained their desires they grow careless, and slight a woman, as not worthy of their society; and for their love, they are requited with reproches, harsh language, scorn, and disdaine. But I speake not this in generall, for I know there are many provident

nest, and loving men, that giveth all due respect to their wives, and are carefull of their reputation and charge; and I heartily wish that the number of such men were greater, for then so many good and honest women should not seele so much griefe, sorrow, and misery, as both they and their families doe now sustaine.

I could have written more amply both Divine, and Morall, in defence of vertuous women, but I suppose these few examples will give some satisfaction to the courteous and affable Reader, hoping none will dislike, or take exceptions thereat, unlesse it be those carping criticks befoze spoken of, which hath written so bitterly and scoffingly against the worthy Sex of women; but I could wish them to petition for prace, and to make their recantations, and to confesse their follies, for thus I salute them:

Blush foule envie, and give o're,
Split your Pens, and write no more,
Silent be, and hold your tongue,
Sue for pardon, (that did wrong
Vertue, goodnesse, modesty)
which kinde hearts will not deny.

A carefull Wives good counsell to a carelesse bad Husband, in a Dialogue.

Woman.

Good counsell he're is out of date,
(Pray Husband heare me speake)
But if to me you'll give no care,
I thinke my heart will breake;
My carefull thoughts possesse my minde,
And lodgeth in my brest,

My head is troubled night and day
that I can take no rest.

Man.

If you will needs turne Counsellor,
then at the Bar go plead,
I do not like this Lecture well
that you to me do read;
But if your heart and head doth ake
you may lye down to sleep,
And there I shall not heare you prate,
nor such a coile to keep.

Woman.

You know how every one complains,
the world is grown so bad,
All trading now is quite decay'd,
no work is to be had;
And all provision is grown deare,
bread, butter, cheese, and meat,
Fish, roots, sope, candles, oat-meale, coales,
the price of all is great.

Man.

All do complaine the world is bad,
that helps to make it so;
And if that I no work can get
then I to play must go;
Indeed my Purse it doth complaine,
that victuals they are deare,
But the Excise doth grieve me most
that's set on Ale, and Beere.

Woman.

Alas, provision must be had
if we a house will keep,
And for to run upon the score
it quickly will grow deep;
Our children, they want hose and shooes,
and cloathes unto their back,

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nest, and loving men, that giueth all due respect to their wives, and are carefull of their reputation and charge; and I heartily wish that the number of such men were greater, for then so many good and honest women should not seele so much griefe, sorrow, and misery, as both they and their families doe now sustaine.

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And for to run upon the score
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and cloathes unto their back,

Our

Our shirts, smocks, napkins, towels, sheets,
all weare, and goe to wrack.

Man.

The Chandler I do know bath chalke,
goe tell him I will pay,
And though that I am in his debt
I will not run away ;
Tush, let the children bare-foot goe,
the weather is not cold,
E're thou shalt want ile pawn the sheetes,
or else they may be sold.

Woman.

Good Husband rake another course,
for this is not the way,
Our Creditors will have their due,
or you in prison lay ;
And those which now you think are friends,
if you should need, or lack,
Will all forsake your company,
and on you turne their back.

Man.

That man which doth most mony owe
his credit is not small,
To thole I owe, when I grow rich
I meane to pay them all ;
My company good fellowes are,
and each one is my friend,
Hang mony, 'tis but dirt and trash,
and it was made to spend.

Woman.

Wast not your coyne for feare you want,
and that you should grow poore,
Your Hostis, when your meanes is spent
will turne you out of doore,
She loveth none with her should score,
or any mony borrow,

To such she will this answer make,
I trust not till to morrow.

Man.

Tush, tell not me of this, or that,
thou lovest for to prate,
Ile have my humour come what will,
for baseness I do hate;
Go wash your dishes, or go spin,
and do not talk to me,
Ile play, or ramble where I please,
and ne're be rul'd by thee.

Woman.

If you this course of life still take,
I shall not have a dish
To wash, or any other thing
that will hold flesh, or fish;
And I may take my wheele and spin,
but you i'me sure will reele:
Which is the cause that I and mine
such misery doth feele.

Man.

What, dost thou think I will be ty'd
alwaies to be at home,
And have no recreation,
but sit still like a mome?
I am not of that mettle made,
but must be frank and free,
And whatsoever thou dost say
I'll not be rul'd by thee.

Woman.

If you would stay at home and work
great comfort you should finde,
It would be pleasing unto God,
and quiet to your minde;
You might get money in your purse,
and have sufficient gaine,
The bread is sweet with labour got,

you

our charge for to maintaine.

Man.

It, do you preach, is this your text?
your audience is but small;
The breath you spend it is in vaine,
you prate unto the wall;
When I do please to work, ile work,
when I do please ile play,
And to the Ale-house I will go
to drive sad care away.

Woman.

To drink and swill distempers you,
diseases it will breed,
And those which too much use it
have no desire to feed;
It spoyles the braine and memory,
so doth your Indian smoake,
Which stinkes, that all are neare the fame;
they ready are to choke.

Man.

A Foole, or a Phisitian,
thou one of them must be,
I wonder where you learn'd this Art,
you have great skill I see:
Good drinke (you foole) it breeds good blood,
'tis meat, and drink, and cloth,
Tobacco dryeth up the Rhume,
and Flegme that is like froth.

Woman.

Well, I perceive my words are wind,
my counsell you disdain,
All the intreaties I can use
I see they are in vaine:
But if you follow still this course,
and all consume and spend,
We all shall famish, starve, and dye,
and so there is an end.

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